

QRIS Validation Study Fact Sheet

**Ever wonder how well ExceleRate Illinois works as a rating system?
Ever wonder if we can improve it?
We do, too!**

As part of the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge grant, we are investing in a validation study of ExceleRate Illinois to determine how well our rating system differentiates levels of quality and how well children in the highest rated programs do compared to their peers in lower rated programs.

Evaluators from the Frank Porter Graham Center for Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina are working with researchers at the American Institutes for Research, located here in Illinois, to validate ExceleRate Illinois.

The team will randomly select school-based and licensed child care center sites that went through either the assessment or accreditation path to ExceleRate Illinois. The study is designed to have good representation of these different types of sites across 4 geographic areas in Illinois: Chicago, non-Chicago Cook and collar counties, rural downstate areas, and more urban downstate areas.

At each site, the evaluators will interview the director or principal and will assess the program using the PAS instrument. Evaluators will then sample up to 5 classrooms, interview the teachers, and assess the rooms using either the ECERS, ITERS, or CLASS. Finally, at least 4 preschool children in each site will be randomly selected to participate in assessments in Fall of 2015 and Spring 2016. Parents of the children will also complete a survey on their demographics, language use, child care history, and child health.

Recruitment of sites will start Spring of 2015. At the conclusion of the study in December 2016, the team will write a report to help us make any necessary decisions about how to improve ExceleRate Illinois.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How well does ExceleRate differentiate circles of quality? How well does it differentiate quality by each of the 4 domains?
- How well do scores on each of the 4 domains contribute to the program's overall ExceleRate rating?
- Can we calculate ratings differently to better differentiate levels of quality?
- Do children who participate in programs rated at different levels of quality do better than children in programs rated at lower levels of quality? Are there differences in child outcomes for those in programs that went through the assessment versus accreditation pathways?

More detailed information about the study, including a listing of measures used, can be found on the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development's website: earlychildhood.illinois.gov